Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**

   The Landing at Somers Bay
   c/o Mark Campbell
   1574 Gulf Road
   Point Roberts, Washington 98281

2. **Type of action:** Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76LJ 30065735

3. **Water source name**: Groundwater

4. **Location affected by project:** The place of use is generally located in the Landing at Somers Bay, N2SWNW Sec 26, Township 27 north, Range 21 west, Flathead County.

5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:**

   The applicant proposes to divert groundwater, by means of a 298 foot deep well (GWIC 239211) and a 386 foot deep well (GWIC 239209), from January 1st thru December 31st at 50 GPM up to 6.05 AF. The Applicant is requesting enough water to accommodate 12 units that have year round residents. This is a MDEQ permitted community water supply system, one well is redundant. Water right 76LJ 58561 00 will be withdrawn after issuance of this permit because the uses are no longer applicable to the place of use. Groundwater certificate 76LJ 30065736 provides water for 2 acres of lawn and garden use within the subdivision. The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment: (include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)**

   -U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana Natural Heritage Program: Endangered, Threatened Species and Species of Special Concern, Wetland Mapper program
   -Montana Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks (DFWP); Dewatered Stream Information
   -Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) Clean Water Act Information and PWS Drinking Water Watch databases
   -U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); web soil survey
   -Montana Historical Society

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity *- Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.*

Flathead River and Flathead Lake are not listed by DFWP as chronically or periodically dewatered. Upon analysis by the Department the source aquifer and Flathead River/Lake were found to have water in excess of that requested by the Applicant.

Determination: No impact.

Water quality *- Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.*

According to the MDEQ's Clean Water Act Information Center in 2012 Flathead Lake was listed as having one or more uses impaired due to one or more of the following probable causes: mercury, nitrogen (total), phosphorous (total), polychlorinated biphenyls and sedimentation/siltation. Flathead River was categorized as having insufficient data to asses any use. The Applicant is proposing to utilize groundwater. The wells are approximately 400 feet from Flathead Lake and hydraulically connected to the Lake. The proposed use will reduce the quantity of groundwater that historically discharged into Flathead Lake near the proposed point of diversion. However, 70-90% of the water used for domestic purposes will eventually return to Flathead Lake. Waste water will be discharged directly to the Lakeside County Water and Sewer District's (LCWSD) sewer collection system. The LCWSD uses a lagoon system and spray irrigates treated wastewater for final disposal during the summer months. These return flows will eventually re-enter Flathead Lake. The volume of water consumed from Flathead Lake is expected to have little or no effect on the Lakes water quality. The Department found that the proposed use will not affect water quality.

Determination: No significant impact.

Groundwater *- Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.*

Groundwater flow paths will be altered due to the proposed project. In the immediate vicinity of the well none of the diverted volume will return to the source aquifer or Flathead Lake. However, 4.2 AF to 5.5 AF of 6.05 AF of water that is diverted will return to Flathead Lake via LCWSD's land application of wastewater on land south of the community of Lakeside. The proposed use will reduce discharge from the source aquifer to Flathead Lake in an amount equivalent to their consumptive use. Groundwater quality will not be significantly impacted.

Determination: No significant impact.

DIVERSION WORKS - *Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.*

The proposed appropriation will utilize two wells; the East well (GWIC 239209) and the West well (GWIC 239211) to provide water to 12 residences within the Landing at Somers Bay. The supply system consists of two wells, two Amtrol WX- 350 pressure tanks and approximately 870 feet of associated 3-inch diameter PVC water main. This is a MDEQ permitted community public water supply (PE# 12592), one well is redundant. Each well was drilled by a licensed well driller (license # WWC-450) in accordance with MCA Title 37, Chapter 43 and ARM Title 36, Chapter 21. The West well is 298 feet deep and has a static water level of 36 feet. The well casing is 8 inches in diameter 0 – 170.5 feet, 6 inches 156-296 feet and perforated 277-295 feet. The East well is 386 feet deep and has a static water level of 31 feet. The well casing is 8 inches in diameter from 0 -144 feet, 6 inches 125-386 feet and perforated from 366-385 feet. Each well will contain a Goulds 100H Submersible Pump with a 7.5HP four stage motor. Each pump will be capable of pumping 50 GPM. The wells will operate on an alternating schedule; only one well will be pumped a day. Each well will supply the water system via 3-inch PVC SDR26 pipeline that will be manifold together just before the system of pressure tanks in the pump house. After the manifold there will be a McCrometer MF100 3 inch flow meter. 1-inch HDPE poly pipe feeder lines will transport water to future and existing structures. All wastewater will be discharged directly to the LCWSD sewer collection system, no return flow wills occur. The proposed project shall not impact any channels, barriers, riparian areas and dams. Flow paths to surface waters and within the aquifer will be modified; however modeling done by Department hydrogeologists show that no significant negative impact will occur to existing water users and surface/groundwater resources.

Determination: No significant impact.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program and DFWP websites were reviewed to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern" in Township 27N, Range 21W that could be impacted by the proposed project.

According to MFWP there is one plant species of concern, the Columbia Water-meal (Wolffia Columbiana). This area has been disturbed for over 30 years, impact to the sensitive plant species has most likely already occurred.

The Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus) is listed as threatened by the USFWS. The Wolverine (Gulo gulo), Fisher (Martes pennanti) and Westslope Cutthroat Trout (Oncorhynchus clarkia lewisi) are listed as sensitive species by USFWS. The Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) and Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) are listed S3 by MFWP meaning their populations are at risk because their numbers are very limited. The Pygmy Whitefish (Prosopium coulteri) and Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) are listed S2 by MFWP, meaning their populations are at risk because their numbers are extremely limited and/or rapidly declining. An adequate quantity of water will still exist in the Flathead Lake to maintain existing populations of both threatened and sensitive species of fish. Development has existed on this section of lakeshore for sometime; any impacts to sensitive mammal species most likely has already occurred. The proposed project will not impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants and aquatic species or any species of special concern.

Determination: No significant impact.

Wetlands *- Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

Determination: N/A, project does not involve wetlands or critical riparian habitats

Ponds *- For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

Determination: N/A, project does not involve ponds.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

According to soil survey data provided by the NRCS within the place of use soils are mostly very ashy silt, to silt loam, to very gravelly silt loam. All these soils are moderately well drained and not susceptible to saline seep. Where wastewater is land applied soils are not susceptible to saline seep. The use of water for multiple domestic purposes will not cause degradation of soil quality and stability.

Determination: No impact.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

Any impacts to existing vegetation will be within the range of current disturbances due to current development within the subdivision. No land will be disturbed due to this application, therefore noxious weeds are not expected to be established or spread.

Determination: No impact.

AIR QUALITY - *Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.*

Adverse air quality impacts from increased air pollutants are not expected as a result of this project. No air pollutants were identified as resulting from the applicants proposed use of Flathead Lake water.

Determination: No impact.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.*

Determination: N/A, project is not located on state or federal land.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

All impacts to land, water and energy have been identified and no further impacts are anticipated.

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

The project is located in an area with no locally adopted environmental plans.

Determination: No impact.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

The proposed project will not inhibit, alter or impair access to present recreational opportunities in the area. The project is not expected to create any significant pollution, noise, or traffic congestion in the area that may alter the quality of recreational opportunities. The proposed place of use and diversion do not exist on land designated as wilderness.

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

There should be no significant negative impact on human health from this proposed use.

Determination: No impact.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*
Yes___ No_x__ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: No impact.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*

Impacts on:

(a) *Cultural uniqueness and diversity?* None identified.

(b) *Local and state tax base and tax revenues?* None identified.

(c) *Existing land uses?* None identified.

(d) *Quantity and distribution of employment?* None identified.

(e) *Distribution and density of population and housing?* None identified.

(f) *Demands for government services?* None identified.

(g) *Industrial and commercial activity?* None identified.

(h) *Utilities?* None identified.

(i) *Transportation?* None identified.

(j) *Safety?* None identified.

(k) *Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?* None identified.

2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:***

Secondary Impacts: None identified.

Cumulative Impacts: None identified.

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** None identified.

4. ***Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:*** No reasonable alternatives were identified in the EA.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternativ: None identified.

2 Comments and Responses: None.

3. *Finding:*
*Yes___ No_**x**__ Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?*

If an EIS is not required, explain <u>why</u> the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action because no significant impacts were identified.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Melissa Brickl
Title: Hydrologist/Water Resource Specialist
Date: July 19, 2013